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WHY THE PUEBLO?

When trying to justify increases in spending — in the face of mounting deficits and debts and the sinking value of our dollar — President Johnson implies that his spending is at the irreducible minimum necessary for national defense.

In his 1968 State of the Union message, announcing the biggest budget in history ($186.1 billion), he implied that his requested spending *increases* are for the Vietnam war. The truth is that the war accounts for only 14% ($26.3 billion) of Johnson's budget. Non-defense spending (most of it on harmful, unconstitutional, great-society programs) is rising much faster than defense spending.

In the last year of Eisenhower's administration and the first year of Kennedy's (fiscal 1961), government spent $47.6 billion on defense; $51.9 billion on non-defense activities. In fiscal 1969, Johnson will spend $79.8 billion for defense, $106.3 billion for non-defense activities. Johnson has more than doubled non-defense spending (101% increase), while increasing defense spending by 67%. *He could save $54.4 billion a year by cutting non-defense spending back to what it was at the beginning of the Kennedy administration.*

The President demands a 10% tax surcharge that will produce about $12 billion a year additional revenue. With the tax, he anticipates an $8 billion deficit in fiscal 1969; without it, a $20 billion deficit. He demands the tax as the only means of financing the war and at the same time bringing government revenue and spending close enough together to head off ruinous inflation. *But he could eliminate the $20 billion deficit, give taxpayers a $34.4 billion tax reduction, and still have every penny of the $79.8 billion budgeted for the Vietnam war and all other defense activities, by merely cutting non-defense spending back to what it was when he and Kennedy took over.*

Far from handicapping legitimate government operations, this would leave the government still spending billions on unnecessary, harmful, and illegal programs. The $51.9 billion spent on non-defense activities in fiscal 1961 was at least twice as much as the government should have spent — *or could have spent*, if the government had been operating legally, within the limits of power granted to it by the Constitution.

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The $79.8 billion budgeted for defense is not, of course, the irreducible minimum necessary for adequate defense of the United States — far from it. No one person — not even the President, the Secretary of Defense, or the Director of the Budget — knows all included in that incomprehensible sum.

The General Accounting Office has repeatedly supplied information proving that corruption, inefficiency, and bureaucratic stupidity waste billions of dollars taken from taxpayers for defense. Obviously, therefore, we could *decrease* our defense expenditures by billions of dollars and *increase* our security; but that would not be enough.

A defense establishment geared to defend the world, as ours is, would cost us too much and give us too little defense, no matter how efficient its operations.

We need a *legal* defense policy — a policy formulated within the limits of power which the Constitution gives the federal government to provide for the *defense of the United States.* Such a defense policy, capably and honestly administered, would give our homeland infinitely better defense than it now has, at a fraction of the present cost.

The January 23, 1968, North Korean seizure of the *Pueblo*, is the most recent incident proving that our defense policies are detrimental to our national interests. At stupendous cost, we have built a gigantic array of military power. Our government scatters this power all over the world, exposing it as a lure to insults and aggression, but so vitiates its strength with political controls that it cannot even defend itself.

Lt. General Edward M. Almond (USA retired) was ground commander of the 10th Corps which landed at Inchon during the Korean war, and, in 2 weeks, recaptured Seoul, the capital of South Korea — one of the most magnificent operations in the history of American armed forces. I asked General Almond to comment on the *Pueblo* affair.

In the first place, he said, we should have won the war in Korea, inasmuch as we sent our armed forces into battle — and virtually had the war won, when politicians in Washington and the United Nations made us pull back and enter truce negotiations.

General Almond says we could have won the Korean war without precipitating a general war and with fewer casualties than it cost us to lose; and if we had won, there simply would have been no North Korean government to seize the *Pueblo* in 1968; and we would not be at war in Vietnam.

The fact is, however, that we did not win the Korean war. How then should we have obviated the *Pueblo* incident of 1968, or, failing to obviate it, how should we have handled it when it occurred?

General Almond says it is ridiculous for our government to argue about whether the *Pueblo* was or was not in international waters. This is beside the point. The point is that no American military vessel should be sent on any mission anywhere without full protection.

Apparently, the *Pueblo* was sent into dangerous waters without arrangements for aid in case of need, without the capability of defending herself, and without the ability to escape if accosted (the *Pueblo* has a top speed of 12 knots; the Korean patrol boats have a speed of at least 30 knots).

Even this wholly inexcusable condition did not, however, render us helpless. It is dishonest to say that no American planes could help the *Pueblo*, because the only available planes were armed with nuclear weapons. Since we have 50,000 men in Korea, presumably ready for combat with conventional weapons, it must be a lie to say we do not have one plane there ready for action with conventional weapons.

Only the President can authorize the use of nuclear weapons, and the President is obviously afraid to use them. This being the case, why would we have only nuclear airpower in Korea? If we have no conventional airpower to support our 50,000 men there, the Secretary of Defense and all military men involved should be cashiered,

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and the President impeached, for criminal negligence.

Surely, as General Almond says, we did have planes which could have gone to the *Pueblo's* rescue and could have reached her before the communists got her into Wanson Harbor, even if our planes had not been alerted until after the *Pueblo* was boarded.

That this was not done is proof that American military forces scattered around the world are virtually helpless in an emergency because field commanders, politically controlled from Washington, are afraid to use their professional judgment to act even in defense of their own commands.

That this mighty nation let North Korea capture one of our naval intelligence ships without a struggle (just as we did nothing but lodge perfunctory protests when the Israelis attacked one of our naval intelligence ships in the Mediterranean last June) is proof to our enemies throughout the world that the American government does not have the will to use American military strength in the interests of the American nation.

Our political leaders have had the foolhardiness to enter mutual-defense agreements which commit us to defend 45 foreign nations with our armed forces; they have the indiscretion to send our armed forces into areas where they are a lure to provoke enemy claims of American aggression or to entice outright attacks against us; but once the crisis comes, our political leaders do not have the courage or the will (or the patriotism) to use our military strength effectively.

Why should the Ho Chi Minh government of North Vietnam listen to Johnson's pleas for a peaceful settlement? Having watched the behavior of American Presidents since Truman refused to let Americans win in Korea, Ho Chi Minh knows that Johnson will not let the American armies win. When he feels the need, he even slows down our limited air offensive, through the hoax of a temporary truce. Any time he pleases, he can stop the mighty American military machine completely, by merely entering fraudulent "peace negotiations" as his fellow communists did in Korea 17 years ago. Instead of fighting to win, Johnson restrains our armed forces, while offering Ho Chi Minh a multi-billion dollar bribe to stop fighting.

Ho Chi Minh is waiting until the time is right for him. Then he will dictate the terms of American withdrawal. He will tell Johnson how much American aid he wants for the rehabilitation of Vietnam. He will decide upon a coalition regime which will give communists eventual control of all of Vietnam, while American aid pours in to provide the communists with roads, industries, civilian goods, war materials.

And while Ho Chi Minh is arranging all of that, his fellow communists will be arranging other limited wars for America in Thailand, Korea, elsewhere in Asia; or in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America; or in the streets of American cities; or in many places simultaneously.

General Almond said that sending the *Pueblo* into the Sea of Japan without protection was comparable to the sending of troops into Detroit last summer with unloaded guns. He quoted some profoundly important comments which he said he had heard the late General Douglas MacArthur make many times:

"Do not fool with a mob unless you mean business. Either leave it alone or go in to clean it out altogether. I would never command a column with unloaded guns."

MacArthur was drawing not only on his wisdom but on his experience. In the closing days of the Hoover administration, MacArthur was asked to use troops with unloaded guns to get communist-led bonus marchers out of Washington. He sent his troops fully armed and ready to fight with everything they had. They cleaned the bonus marchers out without a casualty on either side.

Ronald Reagan, Governor of California, says we should send enough power into Wanson Harbor to rescue our ship and crew if the communists do not release them in 24 hours.

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What else *can* we do? Letting the communists get away with this outrage puts us in danger of communist provocation and attack anywhere at anytime the communists please. We might not get our men back alive, but vigorous action now could save thousands of American lives in the future, by showing the communists they will lose, not gain, by aggression against us.

U. S. Representative Richard L. Roudebush (Indiana Republican) says:

"At this writing the seizure of the USS *Pueblo* by communist North Korea has not been resolved, but the utter bankruptcy of our foreign policy has already been exposed. The Johnson administration's first move in this event was to appeal to the Russians for assistance in getting our ship back. This was like asking the devil for a permit to leave Hades! But, crying to Moscow for help illustrated the incredible stupidity of a foreign policy that has preached 'bridge-building' to the 'mellowing' communists during the past seven years. The Kennedy-Johnson administrations have sought to sell the American public that communist aggression is receding, the communist unity has crumbled, and the Reds have abandoned their plans for world conquest. This has been the official line despite not one crumb of solid evidence. The only validity to this theory is in the heads of the egg heads running this nation's foreign policy. The charade has been carried out through the Berlin Wall crisis, the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam war and now in the present crisis with North Korea. But, in every showdown, the communists stand together, and Uncle Sam loses . . . . With 500,000 of our fighting men pinned down in an Asian land war and our financial stability tottering dangerously, the Russians and Chinese keep stoking the Vietnam fire without losing a single soldier. And, American casualty lists grow daily. Our only hope now is to get some intelligent and courageous leadership in charge before we are bled to death overseas and at home."

I agree with Mr. Roudebush, but do not think Congress should wait for leadership in the White House. Congress should give the President an ultimatum: if he does not beat the North Vietnamese government into surrender within 60 days, Congress will officially declare war.

Then we would have a formal enemy, to which the constitutional definition of treason would *unquestionably* apply. This would make it treason, punishable by law, for any American to give aid and comfort to the enemy, as communists, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, and assorted other "new leftists" are doing — and as Johnson himself is doing, by giving American money and goods to, and promoting trade with, communist nations which are sending North Vietnam weapons and other vital war materials.

If Americans cannot compel the present Congress to do what should be done, they should elect statesmen this year to do it.

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